

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 30

By Clemmons

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Bettie Kirkland on her retirement from Project Return.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we honor those who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their careers; and

WHEREAS, Bettie Kirkland is one such individual, who stood as the chief executive officer of the nonprofit organization Project Return for more than a decade; and

WHEREAS, after much labor and many endeavors, Ms. Kirkland stepped down in October 2022, taking a much-deserved retirement from her role at the helm of Project Return; and

WHEREAS, Project Return was founded in 1979 by the Reverends Bill Barnes and Don Beisswenger, who realized the immense difficulties and myriad obstacles that face men and women who seek to reintegrate into society after being incarcerated, and now helps hundreds each year to reenter successfully into public life; and

WHEREAS, Bettie Kirkland, building upon the cornerstone laid by these venerable founders, rendered sterling service while in office, an invaluable administrator who did her utmost to lead by example and help wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, during Ms. Kirkland's tenure, Project Return launched two social enterprises focused on job creation for the formerly incarcerated and expanded its operations to Chattanooga, as well as purchasing and renovating its Lafayette Street headquarters in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Project Return also won numerous awards and recognitions while under the leadership of Ms. Kirkland, including the Nashville Entrepreneur Center's Social Enterprise

Incubator recognition, Bank of America's Neighborhood Builder Award, two NEXT Awards for Social Enterprise Start-Up, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce's Regional Impact Award for Business Development, *Nashville Business Journal's* Best in Business Award, the Center for Nonprofit Management's Innovation Catalyst recognition, and the Tennessee Housing Development Agency's Housing Leadership Award; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kirkland's time with Project Return was marked with continuous innovation and improvement, showing forth a fervency in mission and passion for the people whom she served; and

WHEREAS, Bettie Kirkland exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career with Project Return, Ms. Kirkland demonstrated surpassing professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the respect and admiration of her colleagues and clients; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Bettie Kirkland for over a decade of devoted service to the formerly incarcerated as the chief executive officer of Project Return, extending our best wishes for every happiness in her retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.